

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DPW-01 SSO-00 DRC-01 CIEP-02

AID-20 /117 W

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R 021106Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9737

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

DEPCHIEF JUSMAAG UDORN THAILAND

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5161

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LA

SUBJECT: CASE OF DETAINED U.S. CITIZEN ROBERT GIBSON

1. EMBOFF CALLED THIS AFTERNOON (JULY 2) ON KITHONG VONGSAY, LEGAL ADVISER TO PRIME MINISTER, TO BRIEF HIM INFORMALLY ON FACTS IN GIBSON CASE AS WE UNDERSTOOD THEM FROM VIENTIANE POLICE AND JUDICIAL SOURCES. OUR EXPECTATION WAS THAT PRIME MINISTER MIGHT TURN TO KITHONG FOR ADVICE ON CASE IN NEAR FUTURE.

2. KITHONG SAID THAT HE HAD SPENT MORNING DISCUSSING GIBSON CASE DURING LENGTHY MEETING WITH JUSTICE MINISTER KHAMKING SOUVANLASY, CHAIRMAN OF VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION TO JCCIA, SOUKON VILAYSARN, AND JUDICIAL AND POLICE OFFICERS. MEETING WAS IN PREPARATION FOR REVIEW OF CASE WITH PRIME MINISTER AT 1600 HOURS TODAY. KITHONG WAS THUS QUITE PLEASED WITH BRIEFING PROVIDED BY EMBOFF, AND WILL USE INFORMATION WITH PRIME MINISTER WHEN HE SEES HIM TODAY. KITHONG ASKED THAT WE PROVIDE HIM WITH LETTER ON MAIN POINTS, WHICH WE DRAFTED AND SENT TO HIM IMMEDIATELY.

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3. KITHONG SAID CASE HAD BECOME BOGGED DOWN IN COMPLICATED JUDICIAL AND POLITICAL SNAFU. HE SAID IT IS CLEAR THAT PATHET LAO ARE ACTING ILLEGALLY IN REFUSING TO SIGN VIENTIANE POLICE REPORT WHILE CONCURRENTLY REFUSING TO PARTICIPATE IN INVESTIGATION OF CASE OR COOPERATING IN ANY WAY. KITHONG SAID HE BELIEVES GIBSON CASE HAS BECOME LINKED TO ISSUE OF RECOGNITION OF PRG, WHICH IS NOW MOST DIVISIVE DISPUTE BETWEEN VIENTIANE SIDE AND PATHET LAO. KITHONG THINKS THAT PATHET LAO ARE PUMPING UP GIBSON CASE AS PRESSURE FOR CONCESSION ON PRG RECOGNITION ISSUE. IF RECOGNITION GRANTED, HE SPECULATED, THEY MIGHT PERMIT GIBSON TO BE RELEASED AS TACIT QUID PRO QUO.

4. KITHONG SAID HE PRESUMES PRIME MINISTER ASKED TO REVIEW GIBSON CASE TODAY BECAUSE IT WILL BE DISCUSSED AT CABINET MEETING TOMMORROW. KITHONG ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT FIRST ITEM ON CABINET AGENDA WAS PRG RECOGNITION ISSUE WHICH WILL PROVOKE LENGTHY ARGUMENTATION FROM BOTH SIDES. KITHONG'S OTHER COMMENTS ON PRG RECOGNITION ISSUE BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.
CHAPMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CRIMES, FOREIGN RELATIONS, RECOGNITION, POLICE INVESTIGATIONS, ARRESTS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974VIENTI05161
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740175-0425
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740779/aaaacpsk.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Aug-2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CASE OF DETAINED U.S. CITIZEN ROBERT GIBSON
TAGS: PINS, LA, US, PRG, (GIBSON, ROBERT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005